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Official Records

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Monday, 15 October 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/56/2)

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of the Republic of Belarus would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Ambassador of Ireland for having presented the periodic report of the Security Council to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

The arguments made in the report deserve serious study and analysis, because they touch on the most topical issues of the functioning of one of the most important bodies of the United Nations, the one responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

The dispassionate statistical data contained in the report confirm that last year the Security Council worked actively to maintain international peace and security. This is convincingly borne out by the significant growth in the number of official meetings — which went up from 144 during the previous period under review to 173 — and by the increase in the number of working documents of various kinds that were examined and prepared by the members of the Council. It is very important that the Council focused its attention on the truly vital issues of settling conflicts in Africa and in the Balkans, the problems of peacekeeping in East Timor, a multifaceted examination of the peacekeeping operations system, sanctions activities and other issues. A number of steps undertaken by the Council helped bring about considerable progress and important decisions in various areas.

In this regard, we believe that it is necessary to note the great improvements in the system of peacekeeping operations. Without a doubt, a key role was played by the recommendations in the report by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, which were presented to us before the Millennium Summit, and also by the activities of the Working Group of the Whole on United Nations peacekeeping operations, which was established by the Security Council on 31 January 2001. Belarus welcomes the initiative of Singapore to hold, on 16 January 2001, a large-scale, open discussion in the Council on strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries. We are convinced that resolution 1353 (2001) opens up new possibilities for positive change in this area, which is a key link in the process of improving peacekeeping operations under the aegis of the United Nations.

The Republic of Belarus, which signed, on 1 October 2001, a memorandum of understanding with the Secretariat on participation in the system of standby peacekeeping arrangements, attaches particular importance to these discussions on this question in the framework of the Council.

I would like to point out the positive role played by the Council in efforts to normalize the situation in

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the Great Lakes region in Africa. It is absolutely obvious that the progress that we are witnessing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi and in border areas between Ethiopia and Eritrea would have all been impossible without the leading role of the Security Council. In this regard, I would like to note with satisfaction the increased interaction between the Council and regional organizations. The joint meeting between the Council and the representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the plans to hold a similar joint meeting on Burundi, in our view, show the need for and usefulness of such contacts. We believe that active efforts should be made to continue holding such meetings.

It is also important to note the efforts that the Council has made in the period under review to interact with other bodies of the United Nations. We are convinced that careful analysis of the still untapped potential in this area is very much needed. It is absolutely clear that the concept of conflict prevention and the full implementation of the strategy of resolving various crisis situations are connected with many economic and social issues. Therefore, we need to tap the potential of other bodies of the United Nations system. In this regard, the United Kingdom initiative on holding a joint meeting between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council that takes into consideration the ideas and proposals of these bodies, in the opinion of Belarus, can and must be acted upon.

Against background of the great progress that the Council has made in the process of considering the question of peacekeeping operations, the activities of the Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions also continues to be a focus of attention of the Member States of the United Nations. We realize that parts IV and V of the report cannot fully reflect the important dynamic of considering the sanctions question in the Council.

After the tragic events of 11 September 2001, the question of sanctions is becoming one of the highest priorities in the activities of the Security Council. It is clear that under present conditions, this question should be given paramount importance. Belarus considers that expert assessments by specialized international agencies and a more careful use of the Wassenaar Arrangement can play an important role in this regard. Belarus welcomes the recent resolutions of the Council on the lifting of sanctions against the Sudan and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We think that the decisive steps undertaken by the Council can be seen as important and constructive contributions towards creating a comprehensive basis for combating international terrorism.

The report reflects the efforts deployed by the Council in the settlement of the Middle East conflict following the Al-Aqsa intifada in 2000. Belarus welcome the efforts made by the Council to put an end to the violence and civilian casualties in the region. At the same time, we regret that the most decisive of steps have not been taken in order to find a comprehensive solution in order to settle the crisis and begin negotiations towards the full implementation of earlier Security Council resolutions and the recommendations of the special Committee of George Mitchell.

We continue to be concerned over the situation in the Balkans. The Security Council report shows that the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo have always been at the centre of the Council's attention. We are convinced that on the eve of elections in the province, the Council can and must do its utmost to ensure that the vote is truly universal and can be a starting point for the full settlement of the situation in Kosovo in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

Belarus also welcomes the steps undertaken by the Council to stabilize the situation in Macedonia. Further careful monitoring of the issues in the Balkans and balanced decisions on the part of the United Nations body having primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security will be, in our view, a guarantee of peace in that region, and indeed of Europe as a whole.

Careful analysis of the report of the Security Council submitted this session once again confirms the need for improvements in its form and content. This was already stated by representatives of many delegations. It is obvious that this document is too voluminous. Moreover, it is basically a technical compilation of resolutions, decisions and others documents that have been discussed and adopted by the Council during the year.

At a time when the Council is constantly improving the methods of its work, retaining the status quo of the format of the report cannot help the General Assembly fully and adequately evaluate the work that is carried out by the Council. In our view, a positive

example in this regard could be the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which does not simply state, but also analyses the activities of the United Nations. We are convinced that additional study and consideration of the opinions of the Member States in this area will improve the report.

The events of this September in the United States of America once again show the importance of the authority conferred on the Council under the Charter to maintain peace and security. The threat of global terrorism means new challenges to humankind, requiring a new consolidation and concentration of efforts and the search for new, and sometimes unorthodox solutions. From this rostrum, I would like to underscore that the President and the Government of Belarus unequivocally support resolution 1373 (2001) of the Security Council, which is aimed at creating an effective, comprehensive mechanism to combat terrorism. We in Belarus are currently working on a number of measures to implement the provisions of this resolution at the national level.

Fighting terrorism brings together the members of the Security Council and all the members of the United Nations. We stand ready to contribute towards that unity, now and in the future.

My delegation would also like to congratulate the new members of the Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. We wish them every success.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada): We speak today on the report of the Security Council this year as a delegation that was a member of the Security Council for half of the time in question. This explains why we understand that some practices of the Security Council have to be the way they are. It also explains why we understand that some things can, and should, change. In particular, we think there are three ways in which relatively small changes in Council practice could reap significant benefits in Council performance: cooperation with troop-contributing countries, transparency and accountability.

One way to improve the effectiveness of Council decision-making is to ensure that there is genuine cooperation with those members most affected by Council decisions on peacekeeping, that is, the troop-contributing countries. An encouraging start has been made, and we welcome the establishment of the Working Group on peacekeeping operations, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ward. We wish to work with the Council and with that Group, and to go beyond consultations to genuine cooperation. Such cooperation, if properly executed, would not only narrow the accountability gap between those who make the decisions to deploy peacekeeping missions and those who supply the troops, but it would also ensure that the Council had the best possible information at its disposal from countries that had their forces in the field.

Furthermore, it would give the Council access to the perspectives and the ideas of the troop-contributing countries. Present practice does not allow the Council and major troop-contributing countries to engage constructively enough on specific peacekeeping missions, and it does not afford troop-contributing Governments the control and influence their national Parliaments believe them to have when they agree to deploy forces in contemporary complex and dangerous missions. Current meetings, with their consultative orientation, are inevitably perfunctory, because they are structurally incapable of producing satisfactory results.

The Security Council Working Group on peacekeeping operations has the opportunity to correct this practice, which was developed in less demanding times for less dangerous missions. We are therefore hopeful that the views of many troop contributors — as contributed to the Council over the past several months, including in the letter that is being signed today by the Permanent Representatives of troop-contributing countries — will be taken to heart by the Working Group. Mission-specific core groups made up of Security Council members and major troop-contributing countries for particular missions would manage operations cooperatively, not just engage in elective consultations by the grace of the Council or at the initiative of an individual member of the Council. That would go a long way to ensuring that the Council's decisions were sound for each specific mission.

Our second point is on transparency and engagement between Security Council members and non-Security Council members. Transparency has been a term of art applied to the more frequent recourse to open meetings that we have seen in the past couple of years. It is an outcome that we worked for when we were on the Council, and one that we welcome. Holding public meetings of the Security Council permits all Member States to have access to the briefing information provided by the Secretariat. It also allows Member States to hear how the Council is

treating issues that are on its agenda, and it can at times permit input from non-Council-member States into the decision-making processes of the Council.

At the same time, the Council needs to guard against the temptation to hold public meetings that have more to do with theatre than with policy. Holding public meetings after decisions have been made on a topic and resolutions or presidential statements have been drafted induces cynicism rather than engagement, and indifference rather than cooperation. The Council has numerous meeting formats at its disposal, from in camera meetings through those to which select members of the membership are invited to public meetings. All of these formats should be utilized, even at the cost of convenience.

Effective decision-making in a global organization requires that accountability trump convenience. Techniques also matter. One of the most important of these, in our view, and the one on which, regrettably, we have had the least success as an Organization, was the attempt by the Council last year, led by the United Kingdom, to engage in a more interactive discussion. Good decision-making is hampered, not facilitated, by non-Council delegations reading out lengthy, repetitive statements, and by Council members sometimes struggling, and sometimes not, to listen to those statements. The practice is inefficient, it is ineffective and, worst, it is self-defeating. Delegations should, ideally, intervene to ask questions or to communicate ideas on how, corporately, the Council or the Organization might handle an issue differently or better. Except for the delegations whose countries are the objects of the exercise, there is rarely a need to put national positions on the record. Where such a need is felt, it would suffice to circulate written texts.

I turn to accountability. Our third point is that, however compelling a rationale for a veto is, it remains true that much of the dissatisfaction of the general membership with the Council arises from the use or the threat of the use of the veto. As previous debates in the General Assembly on Security Council reform have demonstrated unequivocally, an overwhelming number of delegations continue to call for some curtailment of the veto. Permanent members that expect the general membership to respect Council decisions need to respond to this dissatisfaction.

We are not suggesting that those who hold the veto renounce it. But we are suggesting that a voluntary code of conduct on the use of the veto, as proposed by one member of the permanent five two years ago, would be a good reform. From Bosnia to Somalia to Rwanda to Kosovo — to name only a few instances — the veto or the threat of a veto has played a role in the Council's making poor decisions. Such a code of conduct could make clear to the membership under what circumstances veto-holding members consider the use of the veto legitimate. It would introduce accountability to an instrument whose use, unfortunately, has too often been guided by concerns other than the maintenance of international peace and security.

As part of a voluntary code of conduct, permanent members could agree, for example, to meet with the broader membership to explain why they felt they had to use the veto or to threaten its use. Such a step would go a long way to improving the political accountability of Security Council decision-making.

Financial accountability is also important. Who is monitoring the Council from the perspective of financial responsibility? The General Assembly does hold a power of the purse. Greater recourse to that power to ensure that money is well spent is an idea whose time may well be coming.

Another area ripe for better accountability is the format of Security Council meetings. We should begin by stopping the practice of pretending that informal in camera meetings do not effectively exist. Nobody believes that so-called informal meetings are either informal, or mere consultations. But this accepted double-speak has detrimental affects for accountability. Depicting these gatherings as "non-meetings" of the Council greatly understates their importance. It also puts records of the meeting beyond Members' reach and, over time, beyond the reach of historians and others who may wish to analyse why the United Nations acted in a certain way at a certain time in history.

Accountability on this issue is a matter of concern to the General Assembly, not simply because the general membership pays for informal consultations of the Security Council — for the extensive support unit within the Department of Political Affairs, for conference services and for the salaries of the many Secretariat staff who brief "non-meetings" on a regular basis. It is also a matter of concern because Council business is everyone's business, and because we are all affected by the outcome.

The obligations of the Security Council to the general membership as enshrined in the Charter — especially concerning the procedures for their participation in Council discussions — continue to be breached by placing what look, feel like and smell like meetings of the Security Council beyond the reach of the membership and, indeed, of the Charter.

We do not dispute the need for the Council to meet behind closed doors when the situation warrants, as it very often does. But the practice of clothing such regular and important in camera meetings of the Security Council in obscurity — with no records being made available to the membership — does us all a disservice.

The events of the last month, during which the Council was both effective and efficient in responding to terrorism, illustrate that those many hours spent in the back room — far from being non-existent — deserve serious and mature treatment, including record keeping. We ask, therefore, that the informal consultations be treated as what they are: private meetings of the Security Council to which the Charter and Council rules of procedure should apply.

Finally, we, like others, find the report of the Security Council — this compendium of documents — to be long and of only chequered benefit. Much of the information in that report is already available on the Web site and, in this age of computer and Web sophistication, we could dispense with a good deal of what is in the report.

In summary, the events of the past five weeks have demonstrated that the Security Council can respond well to threats to international peace and security. Our job — the Council's job and the Assembly's job — is to continue to work to develop better means of cooperation, better habits of transparency and better processes of accountability to make the Council the fully effective organ that the dangerous world we now live in demands.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): I should like at the outset to thank the Permanent Representative of Ireland, Ambassador Richard Ryan, for introducing this year's report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter mandates the Security Council to submit annual reports to the General Assembly, while Article 15 mandates the General Assembly to consider these reports. Thus, as the only United Nations organ which receives an annual report from the Council, we believe that the General Assembly should view this mandate not only as an opportunity for exchanging views on the matters the Council is seized of, but also as a means for conveying to the Council the Assembly's views on the Council's work and decisions.

At this and previous sessions, delegations have commented upon certain aspects of the format, content and presentation of the Council's report and, in this regard, have suggested improvements. We hope these suggestions will continue to be taken into account by the Council with a view to improving the presentation of the report.

Given the large number of issues and activities covered in the Council's report, I wish to confine my statement to just some of them.

Of the many country and regional situations of which the Council was seized during the period covered by the report, my delegation wishes to highlight that of East Timor. In this regard, the Council's efforts must be commended. To date, the successful recent elections have certainly been the high point of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, which is in many respects a historic and nation-building mission. Full independence will be the next step. Nevertheless, an appropriate international presence and level of assistance will be needed after independence. The size, composition and nature of the presence should also be determined in consultation with the East Timorese people. In the final analysis, the future of East Timor lies in the hands of its people.

We also feel that the Council should play a role in helping to defuse tensions in the Middle East. At the same time, it is clearly recognized that terrorism is a threat to international peace and security. We have no doubt that the Security Council, particularly through its Committee created by resolution 1373 (2001), will monitor this issue in a sustained and vigorous fashion. We hope that the Council will stay in close touch with Member States with respect to implementing Council resolution 1373 (2001), as well as on other matters connected with our fight against terrorism.

Some of the country situations discussed in the report also touch upon or allude to a number of related issues with regard to which my delegation believes more interactive consideration among the Council, the

General Assembly and Member States could prove useful. These include issues such as sanctions, consultations with troop-contributing countries and conflict prevention.

Regarding sanctions, experience has shown that they have inflicted a heavy toll on civilian populations and third parties. The Council's efforts to develop the concept of targeted sanctions, where pressure is focused on those responsible rather than on the innocent, is therefore a positive response in this regard. Resolutions such as 1343 (2001), which imposed a travel ban and an embargo on diamonds, is a concrete example of this response.

Given the importance of further work on this issue, we believe that the general membership would find it helpful if the report were to include, perhaps as an appendix, the summary records of the meetings of the Council's sanctions Committees, without prejudice to the confidentiality of the work of those Committees.

An issue inherent to the various peacekeeping operations discussed in the report — one that is discussed in some of the monthly assessments of the Presidents of the Council — is that of consultations with troop-contributing countries. We wish, in particular, to cite the monthly assessment of Singapore's presidency, which summarizes the key issues raised by troop-contributing countries during an open debate of the Council on that issue. In our opinion, those views clearly point to the need for triangular consultations and the institutionalization of those consultations during all stages of deliberations on a peacekeeping operation. We therefore urge the Council to continue addressing these concerns. The adoption of resolution 1353 (2001) is an important step forward. We nevertheless look forward to further substantive improvements which take into account the outstanding proposals of the troop-contributing countries.

The prevention of armed conflict is an issue raised in the report on which interaction between the Council, the General Assembly and Member States will be needed, especially with regard to the structural prevention of armed conflict, which entails dealing with the root causes of conflict. A number of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the prevention of armed conflict could provide useful input for such interaction.

The report of the Security Council also touches upon the Council's work on documentation and working methods. As we are all aware, this subject is also being dealt with in the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Hence, if information could be provided in future reports of the Council not only on the measures adopted by the Security Council in this area, but also on the reforms being considered by the Council's Working Group on Documentation and Procedures, the General Assembly's Working Group's work and deliberations would be greatly enhanced.

In the monthly assessment by the presidency of Bangladesh a number of issues were suggested for consideration by the Security Council's Working Group on Documentation and Procedures. It would be helpful to know the results of such consideration. We also support the recommendation of the Bangladesh presidency that the Council's Working Group consider the report of the General Assembly's Working Group on Council reform, especially on suggestions to improve the working methods of the Council. In the same vein, there is a need for the Security Council to maintain and, where appropriate, improve upon the measures it has already implemented to promote greater transparency of its work, such as those cited in the monthly assessment report of the United Kingdom presidency. My delegation also supports more dialogue between the Council's representatives and the General Assembly Open-ended Working Group on the working methods and procedures of the Council, using the format employed earlier this year in an Open-ended Working Group meeting.

The thematic debates of the Council mentioned in the report were very useful and should be continued. Nevertheless, we believe they should be more than debates. They should also aim at action-oriented objectives over a medium-term period. Thematic debates of the Council could also be synchronized with debates on the same issues in the General Assembly for the purpose of linking decisions or appropriate policy action by the Council and the General Assembly on these issues. One issue that comes to mind is the prevention of armed conflict.

I have referred to the monthly assessments of the Presidents of the Council because they serve as a good basis for analysing the Council's report. We therefore hope that the section on presidential assessments can be allotted greater prominence in future reports, perhaps as a separate chapter in the main body of the report. At the same time, it would be more than helpful

if the Presidents' assessments were to refer to the highlights of the informal consultations of the whole on some of the key issues considered during their respective presidencies. Assessments of Security Council missions, where relevant, would also be useful.

We look forward in the coming years to substantive consideration of the report of the Council, not necessarily of the whole report, but at least of certain issues addressed in it. Moreover, our consideration should not be constrained by the one or two days normally allotted for this debate. As stated in resolution 51/241, on the strengthening of the United Nations system, this agenda item will remain open during the year to enable further discussion as necessary. Arrangements for further consideration of the report are also suggested in this resolution.

Finally, we also hope that the President of the General Assembly will be in a position to implement other aspects of resolution 51/241 pertaining to the report of the Security Council.

Mr. Sharma (India): Let me begin by congratulating Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic on their election to the Security Council, whose report we are considering.

If we had to describe it in one word, we would call the report elephantine: it is huge, ponderous and, like the blind men of Hindoosthan, we can make little sense of it. We heard the caveats from two of our colleagues now across the moat — the Permanent Representatives of Singapore and Colombia — and we compliment them on their candour at the formal meeting of the Security Council on 18 September 2001, when it adopted this report, and again earlier today.

Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter only required the Security Council to submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration. But Article 15, paragraph 1, stipulates that in its reports the Security Council

> "shall include an account of the measures that the Security Council has decided upon or taken to maintain international peace and security".

Because the Council did not do so, General Assembly resolution 51/193 called upon it to include in its reports, inter alia, information on its consultations of the whole; to highlight the extent to which in its decision-making it had taken into account resolutions of the General Assembly; and to strengthen further the section on the steps it had taken to improve its working methods.

The annual "account", which Article 15 asked of the Council, was clearly meant to be both narrative and reckoning, but it gives neither, and this is the most serious flaw in its report. As I said when speaking on this agenda item in 1998, over and above what resolution 51/193 asked the Council to do, we would have expected an institution's annual report to include assessments of how far its activity or decisions had been helpful — for instance, was the political and security situation in a given country or region better or worse because the Council had acted there? — and its own performance as an institution.

We hope that the views of the membership will receive more serious attention from the Council than appears to have been the case hitherto, as indeed should be considered obligatory under Article 24, which states that in carrying out its duties, the Council acts on behalf of all United Nations Members. The latest report, like its predecessors, is still merely a compilation of documents already circulated. It has no analysis or substantive reporting. It duplicates the annual compilation of its resolutions and anticipates the repertoire of the Council's practice, but, even as an expensive anthology, it is sometimes inadequate, because the summaries are not always accurate reflections of resolutions and statements.

The shortcomings of the report are symptoms of the larger malaise in the Council. It does not respond to the repeatedly expressed wishes of this Assembly because, in its composition, particularly that of the permanent membership, which wields the real power, it no longer represents the wider membership, as it should. It is prevented from reporting on substance, because its negotiations are held in secret, in a format not envisaged in its own Rules of Procedure; it can presumably claim that it is not reporting on these meetings because they have no existence. And yet the Secretariat services these phantom meetings, budgets for them, reports to them and keeps minutes on them. Both meetings and records exist, but, like women under the Taliban, they are veiled and locked away. What one hears is the long lament of a disconsolate General Assembly pursuing and paying for a chimera. At the very least, the time might have come to ask some questions about rules 55 to 57 of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

If the informal consultations are to be financed by Member States, should they not be considered private meetings in terms of rule 55? In that case, we would expect the Council, under that rule, to issue communiqués through the Secretary-General at the close of these meetings and to include them in the report to the General Assembly.

If we are told that the informal consultations are not private meetings, should the General Assembly not ask for access to the minutes, which are maintained in the office of the Secretary-General? Rule 56 gives the Security Council a veto on access to the records of private meetings, not on these.

If only to fill out the record, which is all the report of the Security Council now is, should it not, in pursuance of rule 57, report on the records and documents that it has declassified each year?

It must be one of the wryer paradoxes of our times that, as the Iron Curtain fell, the Council set one up and retreated behind it. Throughout the years of the Cold War, it conducted even its most serious business in the open. As the world emerged into an era of cooperation, openness and democracy, the Council turned into what many have called a Star Chamber. When the General Assembly asked it to be more transparent, its response was to hold the open debates, on which it has reported, but which are an empty ritual for three reasons.

The Council has turned itself, on the average of once a month, into a debating society. This was not what the Assembly wanted, nor is it a useful way for the Council to spend its time and the Organization's money, unless the debates find a reflection in the Council's work.

The Council decides in advance, in its customary opaque fashion, what the outcome will be. The statements made by non-members are therefore an irrelevance. We wanted the Council to take our views into account in its decisions on the issues central to its work. That has not happened.

Because the Council wants complete freedom on the core issues of peace and security, it picks for the open debates themes the General Assembly should consider rather than the Council. Projected as responding to the Assembly's wishes, these debates actually undermine it.

When it holds these open meetings, the Council claims to be acting under the powers given to it by Article 24 (1) of the Charter "for the maintenance of international peace and security". Chapters VI-VIII of the Charter, however, give it the responsibility to settle disputes, to stop both threats to the peace and conflicts when they break out, and the power, under Chapter VII, to use military and other means to bring this about. The Council does not have any powers or role in the management of conflict or the conduct of war, except when it oversees a peace-enforcement operation. The conduct of war is governed by the Geneva Conventions, with its norms for protection supplemented by a variety of human rights instruments. None of these give a role to the Security Council.

When the Security Council spends so much time, therefore, on issues like women and armed conflict, children in armed conflict, or the protection of civilians in armed conflict, all of which pertain to the management of conflict, it steps into areas outside its mandate. That could be condoned if its discussions added value. But, in fact, they add nothing to either the norms set by international law or its practice.

Any audit of the Council's performance, therefore, would have to conclude that it has not done too well. On two of the gravest threats to peace and security, Afghanistan under the Taliban and terrorism, which, like snakes, coil in the same pit, striking together or independently, the Council recognized the dangers but did too little too late. Resolution 1269 (1999) of October 1999 was on the impact of terrorism on international peace and security. Resolution 1267 (1999) addressed the terrorism emanating from the Taliban-held areas, but very little was done to implement them. It took a year and more for the Council, in December 2000, to set up a committee of experts to examine how to monitor the implementation of its sanctions against the Taliban. It then took the Council and the Secretariat nine months to appoint a monitoring mechanism. The cost of this unconscionable delay has been so high that it is imperative for the Council to ensure that resolution 1373 (2001), adopted last month, is quickly and fully implemented.

The Council's management of peacekeeping operations has also been unsatisfactory and bears close scrutiny. Peacekeeping is a costly instrument; this year, peacekeeping outlays will be more than twice the regular budget of the United Nations. Yet the general

membership, which pays the bills and for whom the peace is expected to be kept, has little information on how peacekeeping operations are run, on the problems they face, on why certain mandates are set or changed, or on when and why they are strengthened, scaled down or ended. There is not one word on this in the report. This is presumably how the armed forces act in military regimes, but no ministry of defence in a democracy could get away with an attitude as negligent as this.

But there is more that ails peacekeeping. As most peacekeepers are contributed by non-Council members, who put the lives of their troops at risk to serve the cause of international peace, common sense would dictate a partnership between the Council and the troop-contributing countries. This, however, is not the case. In February, realizing that there was a crisis brewing, the Council established a working group on United Nations peacekeeping operations, but this too has worked, as the Council and its bodies do, *sub rosa*. Resolution 1353 (2001), the fruit of its hidden labours, disregarded the views expressed by members of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations during a meeting in May this year. It was adopted on the day when, by ironic chance, the Council's President and two of his Council colleagues were discussing these very issues with the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, where a number of delegations protested at the Council's rushing the resolution through. All this will have an impact on the conduct of peacekeeping, but there is almost nothing on this in the report.

It would, I think, be a fair comment that the Council needs to make better use of its time. It should focus on its core mandate, but when budgets are tight, it must also assess the cost-effectiveness of the operations it has set up. Some are being scaled back, others, serving no purpose and merely a drain on the United Nations resources, need to be shut down. The General Assembly expects a ruthless scrutiny of every programme brought to it for financing under its results-based budget. The Security Council must do at least as much, lopping off deadwood.

Most of those who speak here will be dissatisfied with the Council's work and its report, but, under the terms of Article 12 of the Charter, the General Assembly can neither replicate its discussions nor compensate for its shortcomings. Apart from anything else, the political problems that prevent action in the Council would come into play in this Assembly, which would simply go through an ultimately sterile reprise.

As we have said before, many of the flaws in the functioning of the Council are structural. Its composition is demonstrably out of touch with ground realities. The Council neither reflects nor represents the aspirations and views of the larger membership. The solution lies in reforming and restructuring the Council. The inclusion of developing countries in the permanent membership and the expansion of the Council to bring in more non-permanent members from the developing world would not only make it more representative; it would, we are sure, make it much more responsive to the needs and wishes of the general membership.

However, for the moment, we are dealing with a Council that is, in every sense of the word, unreformed. In the dying days of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, we went through detailed and inconclusive discussions on how the Council's report should be handled if it was not satisfactory. Our recommendation would be to let the Council draw its own conclusions from this debate and to trust, once more, to its better judgement. Without it, more agonising here would be time ill spent and another resolution as ineffective as its predecessors.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): In matters related to the working methods of the Security Council — particularly on issues related to transparency — Argentina has the honour to have a close working relationship with the delegation of New Zealand, which has informed me that it wishes to be associated with this statement.

Ambassador Ryan of Ireland, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, has introduced the report of the Security Council contained in document A/56/2. This gives us an opportunity to reflect on a variety of issues that, in our view, contribute to the transparency and efficiency of the work of the Council.

The first issue is the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. In our opinion, the report must be a clear reflection of the work of the Council. Although there have been some improvements in recent years, the report remains nothing more than a good compilation and systematization of data. The Secretariat is not responsible for that limitation. It is the Security Council that, from 1974 onwards, has set the guidelines for the elaboration of the report. We

believe that the report should be much more ambitious. It should be substantive rather than merely formal, analytic rather than simply descriptive. We believe that this approach will not only be much more useful to the rest of the membership, but in most cases will do greater justice to the work of the Council.

The initial paragraphs of the report introduce us to the second point we wish to touch upon: informal consultations. Most of the work of the Council takes place in informal consultations. It is true that there has been an increase in the number of public meetings, but it is also true that the substantive questions continue to be negotiated and agreed upon in informal consultations. In many cases, the public meeting is only a rubber stamp of the discussions that have been held during the informals. We acknowledge the usefulness of thematic debates, which have increased significantly over the past three and in which Argentina and New Zealand have participated actively. However, the real degree of transparency in the work of the Council should be measured not against the number of thematic debates held, but mainly against the quality of and opportunity for substantive debates on specific conflicts included in its agenda. We would recall that, during the 1950s and 1960s, most of the meetings of the Council were public and that the States not members of the Council therefore had access to its deliberations. We believe that the number of informal consultations must be reduced and that more substantive open meetings should be held.

Having said that, we are aware that informal consultations are a reality in the life of the Council. Faced with that reality, we must act, first, to reduce the number of informal consultations and, secondly, to allow, in specific circumstances, the participation in informal consultations of a State that is a party to a dispute but not a member of the Council. We believe that Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter constitute a sufficient legal basis for this.

On the other hand, an informal consultation is, by definition, a flexible one. The Council should have enough political flexibility to allow the participation in informal consultations of interested States not members of the Council. It is true that, on an individual basis and outside the Council Chamber, Council members get in touch with the parties to the conflict, but we believe that there are neither legal nor political reasons for the Council to collectively ignore the opinions of the States parties to a conflict. The participation of interested States must not be construed as hindrance of or delay in the decision-making process. On the contrary, it increases the transparency and political legitimacy of the decisions of the Security Council.

From our experience in the Council, we have learnt that the briefings given by the Secretary-General or his representatives are often not necessarily confidential. Their contents can and should be shared in open meetings. We should invert the current rule. In principle, the briefing must take place in an open meeting and, as an exception, in informal consultations. This should not exclude the possibility that, if Council Members deem it necessary, they may decide to have a subsequent discussion in informal consultations.

Another issue that can be discussed in an open meeting is the programme of work which the Council adopts at the start of each month. Such meetings are the scene of a rich exchange of views in which the Council sets the main guidelines of its work for the month ahead.

Also with respect to informal consultations, we recall the Argentine initiative set forth in the note by the President of the Council issued on 28 February in document S/2000/155, in which newly elected members of the Council are invited to observe the Council's informal consultations for a period of one month immediately preceding their term of membership. This proposal will provide for more transparency and allow new members to acquaint themselves in advance with the customary procedures and practices of Council members at these informal meetings.

We think that private meetings can be a useful tool for the participation of non-members of the Council. But it is necessary to establish clear and uniform rules for participation. Here, Council practice has not been consistent. During the reporting period, there have been meetings in which non-members of the Council were allowed to participate, while there have been others where, in spite of their express request, non-members were denied participation. One example was the private meeting held in June 2000 with the Economic Community of West African States to discuss the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. At that time, the two main troop-contributing countries requested in writing to participate, but their requests were denied.

The report indicates that during the reporting period there were more than 30 meetings with troop-contributing countries. We are happy to note that there has been progress on the initiative of Argentina and New Zealand in 1994 to institutionalize such meetings. Since then, the Council has adopted a number of presidential statements and resolutions which demonstrate a positive trend. Resolution 1353 (2001) is a good example. But in our view, in spite of good intentions, its provisions have been implemented erratically and partially. We think that one of the reasons for this is the fear of Council members, in particular the permanent members, that their decision-making power might be weakened or affected by States that are not members of the Council. There is no doubt that the Security Council bears primary responsibility to make decisions on matters of international peace and security. But it is also true that Council decisions directly affect troop contributors, since they bear the bulk of the risks of any operation. There is thus a duty to ensure transparency and to give troop contributors all the information they need to evaluate the situation objectively and take their own decisions on whether to participate or withdraw their contingents. That duty of transparency is not limited to providing information; it also means being receptive to the opinions and concerns of troop contributors. That approach would be consistent with the spirit of Article 44 of the Charter. Should the Council not be receptive to this, it risks adopting mandates that will not be implemented if troop contributors think that they are impracticable.

I want to speak also of access by Member States to the "notes" that are taken by the Secretariat on the content of informal consultations. That matter was discussed during the July meetings of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. In that connection, we want to support the proposal by Grenada that the Secretary-General be asked to report on the procedures for retaining those notes and on the rules governing access to them. This is a matter of importance because, as we have said before, a good deal of the substantive activity of the Council takes place in informal consultations, and the Organization allocates significant financial resources to them. It would be useful to find a suitable mechanism for creating an institutional memory of all Security Council activities.

We will not be able to attain the objectives of transparency and efficiency while the anachronistic institution of the veto persists. The use or threat of use of the veto alters the work of the Security Council, either explicitly or implicitly.

In our view, transparency also requires a better relationship and greater cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council. As someone has said, questions of peace and security must not be construed as a duel between the Assembly and the Council, but as a constructive, open and continuous dialogue between two principal organs of the United Nations. In the General Assembly, we must encourage and strengthen that relationship. Improvements in the Council's working methods in recent years have led to a more open and constructive atmosphere, but there is still a long way to go.

I cannot fail in conclusion to convey our warm and sincere congratulations to the newly elected members of the Security Council: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. We wish them every success in meeting their responsibilities. At the same time, we pay tribute to the outgoing members for their important contribution to the promotion of international peace and security.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I would like to express Austria's gratitude to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan, for his eloquent introduction of the report of the Security Council (A/56/2). My delegation also commends the excellent work of the Secretariat in compiling this invaluable reference source. This occasion is a welcome continuation of the Security Council's dialogue with the General Assembly in the discharge of its duties pursuant to Article 24 of the Charter. This practice enhances the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, bearing in mind the responsibility of the Assembly to act on behalf of the whole membership.

An adequate flow of information towards non-members of the Council is a necessary prerequisite for understanding and assessing how the Council is dealing with political issues; it should therefore be facilitated as much as possible. In our view, the presidency of the Security Council has a crucial role to play in keeping the general membership fully informed on the deliberations of the Council. In that regard, the monthly forecast of the work of the Council constitutes

a useful tool for the daily work of delegations. The briefings of the respective presidencies and the information they make available via their homepages have been further improved over the past year. In addition, the increase in the number of public meetings underlines the willingness of the Council to take into account the views of Member States and to use them as a basis for the Council's decision-making process.

The inclusion in the report of monthly assessments of the work of the Security Council by former Presidents is very positive. The relevance of those assessments could be further increased if they covered and analysed more extensively the decision-making process in the Council instead of focusing too much on merely factual events. Some members of the Council, as well as non-members, have also raised the question of why the report covers a period starting and ending in the middle of a month and have suggested synchronizing the start and end of the reporting period with presidential terms. We suggest that that proposal be seriously considered for future reports.

The experience of peacekeeping operations has clearly underlined that the Council can act successfully only if it is engaged in a substantial dialogue with Member States. In that regard, my delegation, as a traditional contributor to peacekeeping operations, particularly welcomes the Council's efforts to increase the number of meetings with troop-contributing countries and thus to improve the cooperation and coordination between the Council and such countries at an early stage in the consideration of United Nations missions and their mandates.

The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is undoubtedly a central issue of the ongoing reform debate. The maintenance of efficiency, as well as the utmost possible degree of transparency and legitimacy, are equally important goals that should guide the reform efforts of the Security Council. The high-level Working Group on Security Council reform can, however, only come up with concrete proposals if the underlying political impasse is overcome by a reconsideration of positions in major capitals of the world.

I can reassure you and the President that my delegation will continue to support every reform effort directed at increased transparency, efficiency and legitimacy so that the Security Council can best fulfil its mandate under the Charter.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): I would like to begin by thanking the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for his clear-cut presentation of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing such an in-depth and informative report. My delegation has long maintained that the annual report of the Security Council can be an important tool for ensuring cooperation between the Council and the General Assembly, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, in particular, Articles 15 and 24.

Before getting into the details of the report, I cannot help but comment on the subject of terrorism, which has become the most urgent issue facing the Security Council as the primary body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. I would like to reiterate the need for all United Nations organs, and the Security Council in particular, to play an active role in the prevention and suppression of international terrorism. In this regard, I welcome the prompt adoption of Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), which strongly condemns the heinous acts of terrorism on 11 September, and resolution 1373 (2001), which demonstrates the Security Council's strong will to combat any form of international terrorism. I also welcome the establishment of the counter-terrorism committee pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and wish the committee success in fulfilling its mandate.

As the tragic events of 11 September made painfully clear, nobody is free from the scourge of terrorism. These abominable acts were an assault not only on the United States, but also on the international community as a whole — indeed on human dignity itself. Therefore, it should be the responsibility and will of the entire international community to eliminate terrorism in all its forms and to hold accountable those who perpetrate it.

I am also pleased to note that, during the General Assembly's timely debate on terrorism earlier this month, Member States denounced terrorism in unequivocal terms. In this context, my delegation welcomes the statement by the President of the General Assembly and the adoption of General Assembly resolution 56/1, in which the whole United Nations membership reaffirmed its commitment to combat terrorism and pool its resources for that purpose. I believe that this consensus and unity bode well for the

cooperative international effort against terrorism. At the same time, my delegation stresses the importance of translating our commitments into action. For our part, the Republic of Korea will move promptly to fully implement the aforementioned United Nations resolutions.

As the annual report made evident, the Security Council has made remarkable progress in a number of key areas. I would like to take a few moments to comment on some of the topics to which my delegation attaches particular importance. As we reflect on the Security Council's work over the course of the past year, I would like to first reaffirm my delegation's support for the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's far-reaching June report on the prevention of armed conflicts. As I remarked at the Security Council and the General Assembly meetings this past June and July, respectively, we hope to see improved interaction among the major United Nations bodies, particularly between the Security Council and the General Assembly, in developing long-term conflict prevention and peace-building strategies. My delegation welcomes Security Council resolution 1366 (2001), adopted on 30 August, expressing the need for the Security Council to play a central role in conflict prevention, in conjunction with other United Nations organs, regional organizations and key civil society actors. I sincerely hope that the "culture of prevention" envisioned by the Secretary-General will take root in years to come.

My second point relates to Security Council missions. As noted in the annual report, this year saw an increase in the number of Security Council missions to areas of potential conflict. My delegation agrees with the notion, articulated in the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflicts, that Security Council fact-finding missions can be a useful instrument in conflict prevention. I hope that this year's increase signifies a trend towards a more proactive use of such missions by the Security Council.

Thirdly, my delegation hopes that the Security Council can be reformed in a way that makes it more democratic, transparent and effective, in order to better meet the challenges of the new millennium. To this end, the Republic of Korea has been actively participating in the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. While we bemoan the lack of tangible progress in the Working Group, we are pleased that the Security Council has taken a number of steps to improve its working methods, including more frequent public meetings and improved briefings for non-members.

In particular, we welcome the adoption of Council resolution 1327 (2000), which underlined the importance of close consultations with troop-contributing countries in peacekeeping matters, a process that would enhance transparency. As a troop-contributing country and strong advocate of Security Council reform, the Republic of Korea fully supports strengthening cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries, particularly in light of the recent resurgence of United Nations peacekeeping operations. We hope that an improved system of consultations will be worked out, so that the views of countries contributing to operations can be appropriately reflected in the Security Council's decision-making process.

While recognizing the Council's success in peacekeeping operations this past year, an exemplary case being East Timor, my delegation also reaffirms the need to continue to implement the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report on this matter.

Finally, I would like to share two general observations. First, while I am sincerely grateful to the Secretariat for compiling such an exhaustive, voluminous report, I share the view of many Member States that the current report could have been more illuminating if it had taken a more analytical and user-friendly approach. In this regard, I welcome the efforts being put forth by the Working Group to study ways and means of making the annual report more relevant to the work of the General Assembly.

Secondly, while the Security Council's open debates provide a useful forum for delegations to share their views on subjects in a broad context, they have often struck me as a bit generic and formal. While acknowledging the efforts of some Council members to give non-members the opportunity to participate in a candid exchange of views on security matters, I hope that, in future, these meetings can be developed into true debates.

Let me conclude by expressing my delegation's hope that the newly elected members of the Security Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic — will play an active and successful role in international security matters in future. For its part, the Republic of Korea remains

committed to enhancing the Security Council's capacity to fulfil its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus): The increasing demands on the Security Council for responses to conflicts, threats and breaches of peace, and the magnitude of the tasks it is called upon to undertake, are evident in the Council's report (A/56/2), covering the period between 16 June 2000 and 15 June 2001. The 173 formal meetings, the 185 informal consultations, the 57 resolutions and the 72 reports of the Secretary-General considered by the Council constitute the body of this annual report, which the Security Council, pursuant to Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, is submitting to the General Assembly.

The submission of this voluminous report — which, according to the Charter, is expected to contain a substantive, analytical and material account of the work of the Council — is in itself evidence of that body's accountability to the general membership of the United Nations.

The numbers show that, though closed-door meetings have decreased, they are still more numerous than the open, formal meetings. Though there are good reasons for closed meetings, by definition they lack transparency and send a message of exclusion to the rest of the United Nations membership. No degree of briefing following these closed meetings could provide the same amount of information as that received by witnessing the Council's open meetings and listening to its deliberations.

There is no doubt, however, that the working methods of the Security Council have improved, though there will always be room for further improvement. We welcome again the inclusion in the report of monthly statements by the Council's outgoing Presidents; the continuing briefings of delegations and the press by the presidency; the increase in consultations with troop-contributing States; and the Council's general trend towards openness. Transparency and good working methods are having positive effects, especially in the case of peacekeeping operations.

With respect to the substantive aspect, the report demonstrates that not only have conflicts and crises in the world not diminished, they have instead increased, and, in the case of terrorism, they have become more complex. Militant separatist terrorism constitutes one of the gravest threats facing humankind. It poses a clear and present danger to the unity and territorial integrity of States, to life, stability, prosperity and even to peace and security. We feel that the Security Council and the General Assembly have acted with prudence and determination in adopting resolutions for its eradication.

These new crises, regrettably, join a number of long-standing problems which remain unresolved due to lack of political will and the non-implementation of mandatory resolutions and decisions. Selectivity in the implementation of Security Council resolutions shakes the faith of the general membership of the United Nations, especially that of the small States. The obligation of all States to conform without exception to the Council's decisions is part of the Charter, whose provisions we are all committed to complying with.

We all expect and hope for a Council that is able to face the new challenges of a new century. To achieve this goal, the Council must, first, be representative, reflecting the realities of a changed world. Increasing its membership on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution of seats, in both the permanent and non-permanent categories, will give the Council more legitimacy and strengthen its effectiveness. The increase will render decisions more credible to all of those States on behalf of which it was mandated to act.

Secondly, it must have sufficient funds and personnel, a necessary prerequisite for a strong Security Council, so that, as the Secretary-General has stated, it never lets down those who have placed their faith in it. Thirdly, we should remember that no reform can be more effective and useful than the determination of the Security Council to implement its own resolutions and decisions. Finally, it is our view that Article 43 of the United Nations Charter should, in these grave and complex times, be fully implemented, making available to the Council on its call armed forces for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The need for a good relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council, the two main organs of the United Nations, and for coordination of their responsibilities cannot be

overemphasized. The Secretariat's strict adherence to the decisions of these main organs forms the basis for increasing the credibility of our Organization.

We agree with India's recent suggestion to incorporate into the report an assessment by the Security Council of the usefulness and helpfulness of its own actions. We also support greater collaboration between the United Nations and regional organizations, so long as this collaboration is based on the Charter and on the promotion of goals in line with its provisions.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria on their election to the Security Council, and at the same time to thank this important organ of the United Nations for its efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the problem of Cyprus.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): My delegation would like to join the preceding speakers in thanking the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for having introduced the Council's annual report to the General Assembly. As others have done, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my delegation's warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, our Secretary-General, and to the entire membership of this Organization, on the Nobel Peace Prize that has been conferred on him and the United Nations. The Mongolian delegation firmly believes that this has been done in recognition of the efforts that our Organization has made, and the increasing role and responsibility it has assumed, to maintain international peace and security and achieve other noble goals of the Charter. It is also a recognition and support of the Secretary-General's personal efforts and those of his dedicated staff to enhance the role and reshape the activities of this Organization in response to the basic and emerging needs of today's globalizing world.

Article 15 of the Charter mandates that the General Assembly annually consider and assess the work of the Council, which, under the Charter, has broad powers to take decisions regarding the maintenance of international peace and security and act on behalf of the entire membership. My delegation attaches great importance to such examinations. They promote constitutional and viable links between the two main bodies of the United Nations. They also enhance transparency and accountability in the work of the Council. Although the report mainly represents a reproduction of documents, it nevertheless clearly shows the scope and intensity of the activities conducted by the Council during the past year. My delegation welcomes the important decisions taken by the Council throughout the year to strengthen peace and security, prevent further escalation of confrontations and promote peace-building in different parts of the world. In this connection, my delegation fully agrees with the view that the report fails to explain why the Council has not been fully involved in the conflict in the Middle East, a region that demands growing attention, diffusion of tensions and a constructive solution.

It is my delegation's view that the United Nations role in peacekeeping must be further increased and improved. We believe that the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report ought to be vigorously implemented.

My delegation also welcomes the ongoing efforts to further enhance the effectiveness of the Council and to ensure greater participation of non-member States in the Council's work through organizing open thematic debates and discussions on pressing issues. The organization of such debates and discussions is useful and ought to be continued. The themes, on the other hand, should be directly pertinent to the primary responsibility of the Council.

Though the present report covers the period from June 2000 to June 2001, my delegation believes that it is relevant to express its views and position on the Council's activities in response to the inhuman terrorist acts committed in the United States on 11 September. The Government and people of Mongolia fully associate themselves with the firm commitment of the international community to the common fight against terrorism and strongly support the Council's consensus resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) as well as the Assembly's resolution 56/1 to combat and eliminate international terrorism. My delegation believes that the Security Council Committee on counter-terrorism, specifically established to monitor implementation of resolution 1373 (2001), will prove to be an effective collective mechanism to fight international terrorism. It is my delegation's hope that the Committee will soon draw up its work programme. My delegation hopes that all Member States will report to the Committee on the measures and steps taken to implement the above

resolution within 90 days, as specified in the resolution.

The Council's reform is high on the agenda of the Organization's reform strategy. My delegation would like to underline once again the need to speed up the Council's reform. It is regrettable that not much progress has been registered during the past year. Mongolia continues to believe that the number of both permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council should be expanded, and that representatives of developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America, along with the major industrialized powers, should be represented among the permanent members on the Council. Mongolia supports a reasonable increase in non-permanent seats, reflecting the representative character of the Council and enabling a growing number of member States to contribute to its work.

My delegation would like to reiterate its position that an important part of the Council's reform should deal with the use of the veto power, which, in its view, ought to be considerably curtailed. In this context, my delegation would like to suggest that the General Assembly should perhaps, when deemed necessary, be able to address openly why vetoes had been cast in certain cases, ask for explanations and, in return, communicate the views of the general membership on the issue to the Council.

Concerning the format of the report, we have been hearing over the past three years in this hall critical remarks calling the report mainly a reproduction of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Council. Moreover, delegations have been making not only critical — yet constructive — observations, but also practical, meaningful suggestions and proposals to make the reports more analytical and comprehensible. However, as is evident from the present report and our deliberations today, the Council has, unfortunately, failed to respond positively.

The guidelines for the preparation and format of the Security Council's reports to the General Assembly, last updated in 1997, refer to making reports more analytical in character. Proposals were also made to condense the reports and make them more substantive and informative. However, those recommendations have not found due reflection in the past three reports. In this connection, my delegation fully associates itself with the spirit of the frank comments made earlier this morning by Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore on improving the substance of the Council's reports. We believe that the guidelines should be updated, taking into account the constructive and practical proposals made by Member States since 1998, including those expressed during the consideration of this item at this plenary meeting.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, as we are considering the Council's report, to sincerely congratulate Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria on their election to the Council last week, and to express my delegation's hope that they will make an important contribution to the future work of the Council, bearing in mind the sentiments expressed and the proposals made during the present debate.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Richard Ryan, the Permanent Representative of Ireland, for the presentation of the report of the Security Council. That report is submitted in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter and reaffirms a principle that the delegation of Egypt holds dearly regarding the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, namely, the principle of allowing the Assembly to assume its inherent responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter. This should allow the Assembly to follow the work of the Council, discuss the measures it has undertaken and adopt the necessary recommendations about them.

Allow me to present Egypt's views on the working methods of the Council at present, as well as our comments regarding the continued existence of a number of obvious shortcomings in those methods. Those shortcomings have not been properly addressed during the period covered by the report, and have consequences on international security. We must also acknowledge that members of the Council are trying to respond to many of the points that have already been made by the wider membership. We would like to say the following.

First, we note that the Security Council has increased both its public and its open meetings during the past year. However, we also note a continued effort by the Council to vary the format of its sessions, as well as undeniable creativity by the Council in setting artificial criteria for attending or participating in those

sessions. We believe this method makes the Council a selective body, and even an ambiguous one where a tiny number of voices constantly strive to expand their control and will over other members, both within and outside the Council. Those members are often severely affected by the Council's decisions in spite of their total non-participation in the decision-making process.

Secondly, under this working method, which is mostly characterized by non-transparency, the Council has considered two issues of great importance that have a direct impact on international peace and security. Those issues are the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the struggle against international terrorism. With regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Security Council failed several times during the past year to reach a decision on the request to deploy international observers to monitor the situation between the occupying Power and the occupied Palestinian people. In spite of the long and numerous consultations in the Council and the exhaustive explanations provided to the Council by the Arab countries about the importance of deploying such observers to help the two parties control the situation, the Council failed repeatedly to adopt a decision in that regard for a number of reasons. In the absence of any meaningful international mediation in the conflict, this failure has certainly contributed to the deterioration of the situation and to the increase in the number of victims, most of whom are Palestinians.

During the Council's deliberations we heard several views on this particularly important issue. It seemed that some of the members of the Council were not convinced that the Council even has a role in the whole question of the Middle East. It also seemed that those members wanted to turn facts and legal reasoning upside down by claiming that the Council should seek permission from the occupying Power in order to adopt a resolution to deploy international observers. Since we all realize what military occupation means, and what repressive and brutal acts it entails, this so-called argument could only be interpreted by us as a clear abdication by the Council of its responsibility to provide the necessary protection to the occupied Palestinian people, and as a flagrant implication of its infamous policy of double standards, which we have consistently criticized.

Thirdly, as to the issue of combating terrorism, let me state here that Egypt's position was set out in detail before the Assembly during the relevant debate. Egypt views the adoption of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) positively and looks forward to cooperating with other States for a better and more effective fight against terrorism. Yet it comes as no secret to many that the Council's resolution, which places all Member States under Chapter VII of the Charter — thereby setting a serious precedent in the history of the Council — was adopted in a matter of a few days. We heard from the majority of the members of the Council and from the general membership that very little time was afforded for any careful study of the resolution. Member States, which will have to comply with the provisions of the resolution, did not have a proper opportunity to express their views on its contents.

Regardless of the legal shortcomings of the resolution, the fact that the Security Council has established an international framework to be imposed on the Member States by virtue of the Charter's provisions with a view to legislate and organize cooperation and better coordination among members of the international family on an issue that is currently under the consideration of the General Assembly, constitutes a dangerous precedent that is not in the interest of the United Nations nor in the interest of our collective system as established by the founding fathers of the Organization.

Improving the Council's working methods and increasing the transparency of its conduct is a single element in our quest for comprehensive reform in the work and composition of the Council in the twenty-first century. My delegation will continue to participate actively in the discussion of this issue through the relevant working group, which we anticipate will soon resume its work.

The Security Council is a major organ that has an important and serious role. The general membership will look up to the Council in all seriousness so long as it undertakes its responsibilities seriously. The general membership looks to the Council when a grave crisis arises in the expectation that it will intervene on its behalf in a rational and decisive manner in order to defuse crises or to contain them and ultimately control and settle them. But if the Council does not assume its responsibilities with the seriousness required of it, or if it fails to perform its duty when faced with a grave crisis, all States Members of the Organization have the right, and even the duty, to speak out and express their views in the hope that the members of the Council will

acknowledge the shortcomings in its working methods and try to reform them so that the Council can become a just, even-handed and balanced organ that is transparent in its work.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): I, too, join in thanking Ambassador Ryan for his introduction of the report. I would also like to thank the Security Council secretariat staff for their excellent work.

In the view of my delegation, the annual report continues to be an important and substantial contribution to transparency in the work of the Council vis-à-vis the overall United Nations membership. Both inside and outside the Council, Norway has been, and will continue to be, actively engaged in the efforts to improve the Council's openness and effectiveness.

Norway therefore remains committed to promoting annual reports from the Council to the Assembly and to working to make these reports even more informative and useful to the membership at large. We have been listening carefully to all the interesting comments and suggestions made in the debate today, and will consider them carefully in future deliberations.

Transparency has indeed been improved over recent years, in terms of more open briefings and meetings with the participation of non-Council members. But we recognize that more needs to be done, in particular with regard to the involvement of troop-contributing countries in the decision-shaping process of the Council.

Norway will continue to work constructively in the Council and its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations to follow up resolution 1353 (2001) and to establish more satisfactory arrangements for the participation of troop-contributing countries. At the same time, it is the responsibility of all — Council members and troop contributors alike — to make the maximum use of the potential of the important established practice of regular meetings between the Council and troop-contributing countries. My delegation is of the opinion that more could be done to make meetings with troop-contributing countries more substantive and effective.

The annual report clearly shows the scope and intensity of the Council's activities in the maintenance of international peace and security. Norway welcomes the fact that the international community increasingly turns to the United Nations for multilateral solutions to conflicts and other threats to international peace and security, such as terrorism. The 2001 Nobel Peace Prize award testifies to the crucial global role of the United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

My Government continues to be firmly convinced that the United Nations remains indispensable when it comes to building common ground for collective action to meet the security threats of the twenty-first century, not least in Africa, where an array of complex challenges will continue to demand the full attention, not only of the Council, but of the entire United Nations system. Successful management of the complex crises in Africa and elsewhere requires a multifaceted approach to building sustainable peace and development. Peace and security issues are closely interconnected with issues that are the responsibility of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other organs and agencies of the United Nations system. Regional and subregional organizations have also become important partners in the United Nations efforts to promote peace and development.

Norway will continue to work to strengthen the cooperation between the Council and the various United Nations and other bodies and organizations involved in areas such as poverty reduction, humanitarian aid, development assistance, human rights and the environment. This is in line with our focus on a comprehensive approach to peace-building, and with the recommendations in the Brahimi report. We believe that increased attention to the root causes of conflict is good long-term crisis management.

It is of vital importance to all Members of the United Nations that the authority and legitimacy of the Security Council remain strong and undiminished as it makes efforts to fulfil its primary role in international peace and security. Making the Council more representative, while ensuring its efficiency, is crucial in this regard.

Norway welcomes the newly elected members of the Security Council — Bulgaria, Guinea, Cameroon, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic — and looks forward to working together with them in the Council in 2002. We also look forward to developing further the dialogue and cooperation with other members of the General Assembly. I can assure the Assembly that Norway's commitment to supporting the United

Nations system and its efforts at global peace and cooperation remains as firm as ever.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I begin by thanking the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the year to 15 June 2001.

As we discuss the report of the Security Council, we recognize the challenges we face in the months and years ahead in the pursuit of peace and security for all the peoples of the world. It is in this context that my delegation takes this opportunity to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the Organization he leads, for having been awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize for their contribution to the building of a better organized and more peaceful world.

We are at a point in the history of the United Nations when the role of the Security Council as a central organ of the United Nations is clearly pronounced. It is therefore up to us to ensure that the Council's work is conducted in the most transparent manner and that Member States participate as much as practicable in the deliberative process.

During the past 21 months as an elected member of the Council, Jamaica has worked with others to increase the transparency of the Council's work and to increase participation by non-members in the Council's deliberations. The Council has come a long way in these two areas, and a new culture is emerging.

We are particularly pleased that Member States have taken full advantage of the expanded opportunities to participate in the increased number of open debates on a wide range of issues. There has also been considerably improved communication with Member States, in particular with those affected by Council actions. In this vein, the Council has broadened the input of Members and other interested parties by reaching out to them in different forums and by providing opportunities for their participation. We agree that the Council must build on these improvements to enhance its capacity to meet its responsibilities to Member States and the United Nations as a whole in the maintenance of international peace and security.

During this reporting period, the Council has embraced the maxim that in order to deal effectively with conflict situations the regional dynamics of these conflicts must be fully taken into account. The solutions devised for Council action must therefore employ a regional perspective, and the concerns of States in each respective region must be factored into the decision-making process. This paradigm shift has been most evident as the Council tackled the conflicts in the Great Lakes and Mano River regions of Africa. The Council's approach has been ably complemented by the Secretary-General's own focus on the regional dimensions of these conflicts.

In recognition of the role of the Security Council in conflict prevention, the Secretary-General has undertaken to submit periodic regional and subregional reports to the Security Council on disputes that may potentially threaten international peace and security. Jamaica fully supports this initiative and urges the Security Council, the Secretary-General and other organs of the United Nations to develop regional prevention strategies, and to do so in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

Over the past year, the Security Council has been seized of a number of issues, particularly in Africa, the Balkans and Central Asia. As we reflect on the work of the Security Council during this period, we cannot help but recognize the progress made in bringing peace closer to being a reality in a number of areas. We are also cognizant that even as progress is achieved in some there remain many seemingly intractable problems in others. The Council must continue to work with the relevant parties in the search for solutions in a number of these areas, and we must develop new ways to bring peace to these regions.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Council has given full support to the Facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and has used the resources at its disposal to urge support for the peace process. This includes the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region, which provided Council members with a broad perspective of the issues and a clearer understanding of the difficulties yet to be overcome. It also provided the countries in the region, as well as the affected parties, with a sense of the Council's commitment to the peace process, while providing the Council with the opportunity to deal directly with the parties to assert the Council's determination in moving the peace process forward, to hear first-hand the concerns of the affected parties and to seek their commitment to the peace process. In this context, I

wish to emphasize that Jamaica will continue to support Security Council missions where appropriate and desirable to advance the cause of peace.

In Sierra Leone, the Council has continued its strong support for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and has shown its appreciation for the contributions of troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping operations. The Security Council mission to Sierra Leone, which also visited other countries in the West African region, highlighted the regional dimensions of the conflict and contributed significantly to the advance of the peace process. However, the Council and the international community have yet to find an appropriate formula for funding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. We will be faced very soon with the same problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we urge the Secretary-General to make recommendations that are deemed to be most viable for Council consideration. We will continue to work within the Security Council and the United Nations system as a whole to find an appropriate solution to this problem, and we urge all Member States to take part in the discussion of this issue.

Resolution of the conflicts in Angola and Burundi and between Ethiopia and Eritrea also received the focused attention of the Security Council. Where difficulties remain in resolving these conflicts, it is incumbent on the Security Council and the Member States to place increased emphasis on urging those States that can affect the outcome of these conflicts to help rather than to hinder the peace process.

While we have spent a great deal of time on seeking solutions to certain conflicts in Africa, we have not paid sufficient attention to others, particularly in the peace-building phase. This is particularly evident in the tenuous post-conflict peace-building situations in the Central African Republic and in Somalia. We must find new ways to engage and support our partners in this area. We must continue to engage other United Nations organs, funds and agencies in the peace-building and conflict prevention process.

The Council remains fully engaged in moving forward the peace processes in Kosovo and East Timor, with the latter moving closer to becoming the one hundred and ninetieth Member of the United Nations. The two Council missions to Kosovo and its visit to Belgrade resulted in greater cooperation on the issues faced by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, and the lifting of the arms embargo on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Council missions to East Timor and Indonesia significantly advanced the prospect for success in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, as East Timor moves closer to independence.

Jamaica joins in the support given to the Secretary-General's efforts on issues such as the prevention of armed conflicts, children and armed conflict, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and women and peace and security — issues of major concern to the international community.

In the first place, the Council's debate on HIV/AIDS set the stage for the special session of the General Assembly, held in June this year.

Secondly, on 31 October 2000, the Security Council adopted groundbreaking resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. This resolution, the first of its kind, reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. It called upon all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective, including the special needs of women and girls. It also invited the Security Council to carry out a study and to report to it on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimension of peace processes and conflict resolution. The Council still has a lot of work to do in this regard.

Thirdly, in response to the Security Council's request, contained in its presidential statement of 20 July 2000 (S/PRST/2000/25), the Secretary-General issued his report on conflict prevention (A/55/985) to the Security Council and the General Assembly. This report contained specific recommendations on how the efforts of the United Nations could be further enhanced in this area. Next month, during Jamaica's presidency of the Council, the Secretary-General will report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the steps taken to advance the role of the Security Council in protecting civilians in situations of armed conflict.

The Security Council, having highlighted the relationship of these thematic issues to peace and security, must now ensure that the conclusions of these debates are mainstreamed into Security Council actions in specific conflict situations.

In the wake of the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, the Brahimi report, and the recommendations contained therein to improve United Nations peacekeeping operations, the Council has taken concrete steps to implement those recommendations which fall within its purview. The Council adopted resolution 1327 (2000) of 13 November 2000, on the recommendation of its ad hoc Working Group, establishing for itself a doctrine for improving peacekeeping operations and setting the foundation for future initiatives aimed at advancing this process.

Following a series of open debates in the Council, with the full participation of a significant number of Member States, on exit strategies, peace-building and relations with troop-contributing countries, the Council established its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, charged with undertaking a review of Security Council peacekeeping in all its aspects. Thus far, the Working Group has provided recommendations for the Council, which were adopted in resolution 1353 (2001) of 13 June 2001 and which, inter alia, provided modalities for increased consultations with troop-contributing countries, thereby enhancing the input of their views in the decision-making process of the Council. The Council is implementing these new procedures, including the holding of private meetings with troop-contributing countries. The Working Group continues to evaluate this relationship and is expected to make further recommendations in the near future.

The Working Group has also provided the Council with a new doctrine for exit strategies for peacekeeping operations. This was set out in a note by the President on 25 September 2001.

I would like to add to these initiatives a number of other innovations that have had a positive impact on the work of the Council, such as the holding of private meetings with regional and subregional groups and Member States — for example, the meetings with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Lusaka Political Committee — and with individuals, such as former Presidents Nelson Mandela and Sir Ketumile Masire, Facilitators of the Arusha peace process on Burundi and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue of the Lusaka peace process on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, respectively. Further, more frequent use of Arria formula meetings, to hear the views of non-governmental organizations and others, has contributed considerably to the information base of the Council.

The Security Council has also given full support to the Secretariat in building its capacity to provide the Council and other organs of the United Nations with the best possible information and analyses for use in the decision-making process in strengthening United Nations peace operations. These and other undertakings by the Council augur well for the future of our Organization. We must continue to build on them. However, at the same time we must continue to work for a more representative Security Council, and we must help achieve further proficiency in its working methods and procedures.

This report of the Security Council provides a very broad perspective of the Council's work during the reporting period. Member States, while expressing some satisfaction with the depth of information provided, have also found the analyses of issues falling short of expectations. My delegation welcomes the suggestions made by Member States in this regard and supports the view that there is room for improvement. During the remainder of our term on the Council, Jamaica will continue to work towards the improvement of the contents of the report and will participate fully in the review of the report to be undertaken in the Council.

Let me conclude by congratulating those Member States that have been elected to a term on the Security Council beginning on 1 January 2002: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria. The task ahead for the Council and the United Nations does not end with the progress we have made, but, rather, depends on us showing the necessary political will to advance international peace and security. Much is expected of us. The eyes of the world are on us.

Mr. Vento (Italy): The tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September have dramatically accelerated the process of deep and lasting change in the role of the United Nations. They have reaffirmed its centrality as the preferred forum for dialogue among States and the promotion of universally shared values and rules. Over a one-month period we have witnessed an incredible series of events. The full unity of intent among members of the General Assembly and of the Security Council has allowed the adoption of unprecedented, far-reaching measures against the scourge of terrorism. We trust that they will be implemented objectively and

collegially, in a way that strengthens the credibility of the United Nations and its organs.

Then, on Friday, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to the Organization and the Secretary-General, recognizing the commitment of the United Nations and the leadership of Mr. Kofi Annan. This recognition invites all of us to increase our efforts to make the action of the United Nations more and more effective in meeting new global challenges.

Today the members of the General Assembly are called upon to assess the work of the Security Council in the crucial field of peace and security. This creates a rare opportunity for dialogue and interaction between the main organs, pursuant to Article 15 of the Charter. We hope that the debate can shed the rituals that have characterized it in the past and lead, instead, to specific, constructive proposals to bring to the attention of Security Council members.

To achieve this purpose, the format and contents of the Security Council's annual report should be revised. Such a costly but — let's face it — inadequate document does not allow the General Assembly to make an assessment of the Council's performance. We thus share the proposals formulated in this regard by non-permanent members, such as Singapore and Colombia, who are striving to make the reports contents more substantial and analytical. If the Assembly is to measure and monitor the impact of the Council's decisions and results, then we should know not so much the quantity of the Council's action as the quality.

The real business of the Security Council gets done in the informal consultations. But the Council's decisions are the business of all Member States. Apart from the fact that they are mandatory and involve considerable financial burdens, they affect an increasing number of areas. The broader notion of international security has grown across the boundaries to include topics that used to be treated either at the national level or, in the international context, through traditional instruments of cooperation. Today the Security Council's competences extend from the multifaceted campaign against terrorism to the fight against HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases; from the protection of women, children and civilians in armed conflicts to the safeguarding of refugees. Having said all this, it is self-evident that such decisions deserve — indeed demand — the maximum possible transparency, exactly the opposite of what is obtained through recourse to informal consultations.

We must lift the veil that covers the Security Council's working methods and sometimes makes its decisions so controversial. This is a prerequisite if we wish such important deliberations to be truly shared and embraced by all. We cannot allow doubts to be nurtured about a Security Council that initiates more and more complex peacekeeping missions, undertakes fact-finding missions to crisis areas, imposes targeted sanctions regimes, appoints expert panels and establishes mechanisms to monitor their application. All United Nations Members share the responsibility for financing peacekeeping operations, whose cost amounts to approximately $3 billion per year, well in excess of the regular budget, which has remained stable at $1.1 billion per year. Therefore, we must promote greater accountability on the part of the Council and greater openness to the contributions of non-members in order to make its decisions — all too often inadequately implemented — more representative and effective.

While, in the past, its action was often conditioned and paralysed by the threat of intersecting vetoes, the Security Council now intervenes more and more often in the main regional crises. In the past year alone, it has maintained its massive commitment to peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, the Middle East and East Timor. In the Balkans, Italy makes a large contribution to both the United Nations system and to other international organizations.

We are pleased that efforts to stabilize African crises have continued with the starting up of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, preparations for the third phase of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and progress in the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. However, we would have appreciated finding more indications in the report on prospects for greater commitments by the Security Council in bringing stability to Africa through timely peace-building measures.

Cooperation with the main troop-contributing countries has also made progress, but this partnership must be strengthened and made more meaningful, especially during the decision-making stage when peacekeeping missions are launched or their mandates substantially revised. We look forward to our

November appointment for the introduction of further improvements, borrowing from practices that have developed recently, as requested in resolution 1353 (2001) of 13 June 2001.

In the past year, the Security Council has devoted special attention to improving its decision-making processes. Spurred by the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report and incorporating some of the proposals formulated by the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, the Council has started with renewed energy to address conflict prevention, the definition of credible mandates during crisis management, exit strategies and the transition to peace-building through a more structured dialogue with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. To that end, we urge the Security Council and the Secretary-General to take full advantage of the range of instruments provided for by the Charter, particularly under Chapter VI, and to make the liaison with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council more operational and effective.

A promising area where the Security Council could strengthen its action is the improvement of relations with regional organizations, which are often equipped with sufficient will for action and varied means of intervention to quickly and effectively deal with situations of instability that closely affect their members. In this sense, collaboration between the Security Council and the European Union, as well as with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States, has intensified in recent years, both at the operative level and in the decision-making bodies, as attested to by the fourth high-level meeting promoted last February by the Secretary-General, as well as by the statement to the Security Council by Javier Solana, the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Italy believes that the development of crisis-management capability in the European Union represents a substantial added value for rapid deployment capability and, in general, for the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations conducted under the aegis of the United Nations. Consequently, we intend to work to further develop European Union/United Nations cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management.

In the changing international context, the United Nations is in the front line as the forum for global governance. We must therefore continue to review the workings of the organ established to maintain peace and security in the world. To that end, Italy will carry on its commitment to the process of Security Council reform. By building on past progress, we can achieve comprehensive reform in all its aspects, thereby fulfilling the commitment undersigned by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to express the gratitude of my delegation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for submitting the Council's annual report to the General Assembly, in accordance with Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter.

My country attaches particular importance to the item under consideration, as it provides the occasion for interaction between those two main organs of the United Nations and a useful opportunity for States Members to assess and embark on substantive dialogue. In recent years, we have joined our voice to those calling for an effort to be made to improve the quality of the report. We have to acknowledge today that we are concerned to have noted no success in that task.

The report before us today is a mere compilation of papers providing a documentation of the Council's activities. No genuine effort has been made to have it inform the Assembly about the considerations and assessments undertaken by the Council on various subjects before it during the reporting period; instead, it simply reproduces resolutions that are already known and distributed. Such a format hampers understanding and judgement of the Council's arguments and motives in approving them. In truth, this report is designed not to establish dialogue, but to provide a reference archive. The greatest drawback of this format is that it does not direct the participatory understanding of the Assembly, but merely fulfils a formality, which necessarily provokes a sceptical reaction.

One way to remedy this situation would be to increase the number of meetings open to all Members. We have often stated the need to have more such meetings. These should not be confined to subjects of general importance on which reports of the Secretary-General are requested and analysed, as has been done in the past. The non-member States should be able to

contribute and present their position on issues under consideration that will later be the subject of resolutions that are binding on all Members.

With this, we in no way seek to undermine the Charter powers and prerogatives of the Security Council, particularly with regard to the Council's decision-making process. We seek to create an opportunity to listen to and hear the opinions of those to whom the implementation and financing of the Council's decisions will fall. The Council is mistaken in preventing that.

We cannot fail to note the responsibility of the General Assembly in this matter. We must say quite frankly that we have been unable to implement existing agreements that are directly linked to the Security Council's report. In the process of improving the General Assembly's methods of work, that organ has adopted various resolutions, inter alia, resolution 51/241, "Strengthening of the United Nations system", in which various tasks are assigned to the Assembly, the implementation of which required the necessary political will. The principal task here is an assessment by the President of the Assembly of the debate on the item, on the basis of which he can designate one of the Vice-Presidents to conduct consultations on any additional action that might be deemed necessary. Since the adoption of that resolution five years ago, no such assessment has been made. We would certainly wish this to be done now.

Let me also stress once again the importance of Security Council action. The two resolutions adopted in the wake of the 11 September tragedy are of enormous relevance to international peace and security, and my delegation supports them without reservation. The urgency of the subject has once more led the Council to take the option of formulating international law with very complex implications. This must be the object of careful study with the participation of the entire membership. That is all the more necessary with respect to the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Chile underscores the need for a broad approach to conflict prevention and peace-building. This requires very close cooperation among the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies concerned with development. Cooperation between the Security Council and the United Nations bodies with responsibility in vital areas such as poverty reduction, development assistance, human rights and the environment is crucial if we are to address the root causes of conflict.

Owing to fundamental changes in the international security situation, peacekeeping operations are facing new challenges and complications. The credibility of the United Nations in the new millennium may depend on such factors as its effectiveness in meeting its peacekeeping responsibilities. We therefore consider it important to make effective use of established mechanisms to facilitate consultations between Council members and countries that contribute troops to peacekeeping operations. All nations that provide contingents, including those that provide civilian personnel for multi-function operations, have a legitimate wish — and an absolute need — to be consulted when the relevant operations are being discussed, so that they will be able to make a genuine, not a merely theoretical, contribution to the Council's decision-making process.

Chile welcomes the fact that the world community is increasingly turning to the United Nations to resolve conflicts. Collective international security is founded on the commitment of Member States to multilateral cooperation.

During the reporting period, the Security Council focused its attention principally on conflicts in Africa, but it did not neglect other important issues elsewhere. We followed with interest and satisfaction the outcome of the Council mission to the Great Lakes region and the progress the Council made in understanding the root causes of the conflict there, along with the geopolitical importance of resolving the problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are aware of, and we appreciate, the help and the constant guidance the Council has been providing to the people of East Timor throughout its independence process — which has not been entirely free of difficulties. The Council has also addressed, with commitment, items such as the prevention of armed conflict, small arms, children in armed conflict, the protection of civilians in armed conflict and women and peace, among other important issues, all of which have implications for international peace and security.

Our common goal is to increase the effectiveness and transparency of the Security Council as it carries out the primary responsibility entrusted to it by the

Members of the Organization. We know, however, that, because of the nature of that goal and the diversity of views and interests, that will be no easy task. But it is not an impossible one. I assure the Assembly that my country will lend its enthusiastic support with respect to all that may be required of it to bring about a broader, more flexible dialogue, for the sake of a more promising future for the United Nations.

My delegation concludes by congratulating the delegations of Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic on their election to membership of the Security Council; we wish them every success during their term of office.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): First of all, allow me to thank the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session (A/56/2). Let me also say that my delegation fully subscribes to the statements made by the representatives of Colombia and of Singapore. One may legitimately ask why several elected members of the Security Council are being so critical of a report emanating from a body of which they have been members for several months. Many delegations may even say that Council members should collectively bear responsibility for the report which, as a matter of fact, was adopted by the Council on 18 September 2001. As members of the Council elected by this body, the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 23 of the Charter, we believe that we owe accountability to the General Assembly for the actions we take in the Council. Furthermore, as has been pointed out by several delegations, the report has many shortcomings, and it is important that we recognize these shortcomings so that future reports can be improved both in format and in content.

According to its introduction, "the report is intended as a guide to the activities of the Security Council during the period covered" (*A/56/2, p. 1*). My delegation believes that a clear distinction has to be made between a guide and a report coming from the Security Council. If what is intended is indeed a report as required under Article 15 of the Charter, then it is clear from our debate today that a new approach has to be devised to communicate to the general membership, in a substantive and analytical manner, the deliberations of the Council during the reporting period. The report, which is a mere repertoire of documents previously issued by the Security Council, does not at all meet its intended purpose.

As mentioned by several delegations, the General Assembly needs a concise, analytical and reader-friendly report on the issues that the Security Council discussed during the reporting period. Such a report should fully assess the progress achieved on specific issues and should highlight those areas of difficulty which have held back progress in the work of the Security Council. By submitting such a report, the Security Council would be able to obtain support and understanding from the broader membership, and that would in turn help the Council in dealing with those issues in a more effective manner.

I am not making any new proposal. As a matter of fact, the same suggestion has been made over the past years by a majority of delegations addressing this issue. It is about time that the wish of the general membership were translated into action. It would be most unproductive if we were to discuss this issue again in the same manner at the next session of the General Assembly.

As regards working methods, my delegation is happy to note that the work of the Security Council is becoming more and more transparent. There has been a substantial increase in the number of public meetings where the general membership has been able to share its views on a number of topics with the Security Council. The press statements and the briefings to the press and to non-members of the Security Council after informal consultations provide, on a regular basis, information on issues discussed privately in the Council and are most welcome. There is, however, an urgent need to find ways and means of involving, where appropriate, the larger membership of the United Nations in the work of the Council.

As a representative of the African continent on the Security Council, I wish to express my satisfaction at the particular interest the Security Council has shown in peace and security on the African continent. Indeed, the Security Council has devoted a very large part of its deliberations to African problems. We recall the holding of the Security Council summit on the topic "Ensuring an effective role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in Africa" in September last year. During that meeting our leaders reaffirmed their determination to give special attention to the promotion of durable

peace and sustainable development in Africa and recognized the specific characteristics of African conflicts. They also renewed their readiness to resolve the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those in the Great Lakes region. They stressed the critical importance of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and emphasized that such a programme should be integrated into the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

After such a high-level meeting, one would have thought that concrete and effective follow-up actions would have been taken to resolve some of these chronic problems. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

The African continent continues to be riddled with numerous conflicts. One may pertinently ask why this is so. Very often African countries that are facing problems do not find what is commonly labelled a "lead nation" to take initiatives to resolve inter-State or intra-State conflicts. This is particularly so when several countries in the region also get involved in the conflicts. In the few instances where we get very able and talented negotiators and facilitators, we find that the Security Council not only limits its role to encouraging and supporting the actions and efforts of these facilitators but also shows tremendous hesitation in responding to their calls for concrete action. The Security Council, therefore, should be urged to take a more proactive and direct role in the resolution of conflicts. In this regard, the efforts of regional organizations should be seen as complementary to United Nations initiatives.

The role of the Security Council in post-conflict peace-building is also of extreme importance. There is a sentiment that once a conflict has ended the Security Council's engagement is over. But in many instances the situation after a conflict is extremely vulnerable and in many cases reversible. In view of the fragile political situation that emerges out of conflict resolution, it is essential to focus on confidence-building measures and on the strengthening of democratic institutions. It is only when democratic values are fully entrenched in these institutions that we can have sustainable peace.

In this respect, my delegation would wish to underscore the importance of consultations and harmonization among the various organs of the United Nations, in particular between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. While the maintenance of international peace and security comes under the competence of the Security Council, we should not overlook the fact that the process of sustainable peace-building requires the direct involvement of the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies. Conflict resolution and peacekeeping are not ends in themselves. The welfare and prosperity of the people in a peaceful environment should be the ultimate goal. Peace-building is probably the most vital aspect of a peace process, and adequate attention has to be paid to it.

We wish to echo the disappointment of Ambassador Baali of Algeria and of several other members at the missed opportunity that resulted from the inability of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to have a joint meeting last May. This is all the more frustrating since Article 65 of our Charter clearly provides for such avenues of cooperation.

There are also certain critical issues of direct relevance to the maintenance of international peace and security that continue to remain taboos in the Security Council. It is important that the Council assume its full responsibility as the custodian of peace and security and address such issues in a more concrete and effective manner.

Clearly, this debate today has been extremely useful. By and large, the majority of the speakers have called for much-needed improvement, not only in the working methods of the Council, but also in the presentation of its report. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 51/193 and 51/241, it is the duty of the General Assembly to communicate to the Security Council its views and comments on the report of the Security Council. We look forward to this communication, which will provide the basis for deliberations within the Security Council and will help improve the Council's working methods and its reports in the future.

As an elected Member, Mauritius will continue to work towards a more transparent Security Council, which will benefit the broader membership of the United Nations, and for a more result-oriented, more analytical and self-critical report in the future.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.